

United States Senate

August 31, 2020

The Honorable Elaine L. Chao
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Chao:

I write to request the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) coordinate to the maximum extent possible with the State of Colorado and local governments to mitigate potential long-term impacts on transportation infrastructure stemming from ongoing wildfires across Colorado. Specifically, the Interstate 70 (I-70) corridor through Glenwood Canyon is of particular concern following recent conversations with stakeholders regarding potential future mass debris fall and erosion resulting from the Grizzly Creek fire in the area.

Colorado is currently responding to several wildfires in different areas of the state. These fires pose significant threats to safety in our communities, including to their infrastructure and long-term effects to this infrastructure. I am concerned and request that we work together to monitor any potential long-term impacts on infrastructure stemming from the fires, such as future rockslides, mudslides, and avalanches. For example, the Grizzly Creek fire previously forced the closure of a segment of I-70 for two weeks, which serves as a major transportation corridor and connection to different regions of the state. Potential heavy rainfall, as we had over the weekend, could result in a mudslide or rock fall, which stand to significantly impact safety and infrastructure, and thus the movement of people and goods. I-70 facilitates residents, visitors, and commerce and it is paramount that we are ready to mitigate potential impacts, should such an event occur.

I appreciate the work federal agencies are doing to provide swift support as Colorado continues to respond to wildfires during this uniquely challenging season. I also believe we must continue working together at the federal, state, and local level on wildfire resiliency during and following the fires. Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,



Cory Gardner
United States Senator